

RIPPONDEN
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report
OF THE
Medical Officer of Health
for 1937.

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Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1937.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council
Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting to you my Annual Report for the year 1937.

The Ripponden Urban District has existed as such since the first of April of the year under review i.e. for three quarters of the year. It corresponds in area and population with the three united districts of Barkisland, Rishworth and Soyland. The greater part of my report will deal with the district as a whole. The Vital Statistics will be an exception.

Public Health Officers of the Authority.

Part-time Medical Officer of Health :—A. J. W. Stephen, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H. who also holds the appointments of District Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator.

Sanitary Inspector :—George S. Taylor, C.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

Waterworks Manager—John Holroyd, who is also Chief Financial Officer and Rating and Valuation Officer.

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area of the new District—13,240 acres.

Registrar-General's estimate of Resident Population issued 1937—5,248.

Number of Inhabited Houses (end of 1937) according to rate books—1723.

Rateable Value—£31,069.

Sum represented by a penny rate—£124.

Social Conditions.—The chief industries are Cotton and Woollen manufacture. There is a small amount of Engineering and a considerable number of men find employment in the motor-carriage business of which Ripponden is a centre. The land is used for dairy-farming, the feeding of cattle and poultry-keeping. One rarely sees a cultivated field.

Unemployment on the whole was less due to a temporary improvement in the Cotton Industry.

The Ripponden & District Nursing Association, which is well supported, provides a Nurse—Nurse Glover—but her services are not available for the Rishworth ward. This is regrettable.

The late District Nurse (Nurse Neave) is now the County Midwife and Maternity Nurse for this area under the Midwifery Act, 1936. Her experience, ability and sympathy in her work are recognised and appreciated.

Vital Statistics.—These are somewhat complicated owing to the amalgamation of Barkisland, Rishworth and Soyland Urban Districts at the end of the first quarter of 1937 to form the new Ripponden Urban District. The Registrar-General has provided figures (births, deaths, etc.) for the first quarter in each of the three old districts and for the remaining three quarters in the case of Ripponden. He has also given a population figure for each by means of which annual rates can be calculated. It is necessary for me to do this.

The numbers of live births, still births and deaths are those **Registered** during the calendar year (i.e. 1st Jan. to 31st Dec. inclusive).

The Comparability Factor or as it is now styled the Areal Comparability Factor (A.C.F.) is provided and applies only to the crude death-rate for “All Causes.”

In the first place, I give the figures and rates for each of the four districts and the rates for England and Wales :—

	Live Births	Rate per 1000 population	Deaths	Rate per 1000 population
Barkisland U.D.	5 (1M+4F)	14.6	5 (2M+3F)	14.4
Rishworth U.D.	Nil	Nil	3 (2M+1F)	16.3
Soyland U.D.	14 (9M+5F)	18.2	17 (7M+10F)	19.2
Ripponden U.D.	49 (26M+23F)	12.4	60 (27M+33F)	14.1
England & Wales	—	14.9	—	12.4

Of Stillbirths there were 3 in Ripponden and one in Soyland (all legitimate) the rates per 1000 population being Ripponden 0.76, Soyland 1.31, and England and Wales 0.60.

The Deaths under one year of age were 4 (3M and 1F), all legitimate, but I do not give the rates per 1000 births for each district as they are incongruous.

In the second place, by totalling all the births, deaths, etc. I give the rates for the whole district which will more readily compare with the England and Wales rates, and will be useful for comparison next year :—

	Birth-rate	Stillbirth rate	Death-rate	Death-rate of Infants (per 1000 births)
Whole District	12.9	0.76	16.19	58.8
England & Wales	14.9	0.60	12.4	58.

There were no deaths from Infectious Diseases nor from Puerperal causes.

There were 2 illegitimate births—death-rate nil.

Death from Cancer (all ages)—11.

„ „ Measles (all ages)—none.

„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)—none.

„ „ Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)—none.

There were 5 deaths from Pneumonia (all forms); 26 from Heart Disease; 5 from Cerebral Haemorrhage; 3 from Influenza and among other defined causes there was one from Violence.

Infectious Diseases.

The reputation of the area for its freedom from epidemics of notifiable infectious diseases has been marred by an epidemic of **Scarlet Fever**. Three cases were notified (to the Soyland Council) in February, then in April another case occurred and the disease continued in isolated cases until the full epidemic began in October and continued until the end of the year (and, I may say, into the present year). Altogether 38 cases were notified during the year. Of these 26 (a larger proportion than ever before) were removed to the Northowram Isolation Hospital of the Halifax C.B. with which this Council has an agreement for isolation. The majority of cases are retained in hospital 4 weeks. Probably some carriers result. In one instance I was very suspicious that a child, who had been discharged a short time, had infected other children.

Four cases were isolated at the Rishworth School.

The disease was of a mild type.

Two cases of **Diphtheria** were also notified, one being removed to hospital.

In all cases disinfection was carried out by the Sanitary Inspector.

I would again say that I keep a small stock of Diphtheria Antitoxin, (provided by the Council) for use by any practitioner as a first injection in all suspicious cases.

I held Diphtheria Immunisation Clinics at all the schools in Nov.—Dec. It is important to remember that children under school age are liable to be infected with Diphtheria, and I would stress the value of these being immunised, as they can be free of charge, either at my surgery or at the surgery of their medical attendant.

Tuberculosis.

The number of cases on the Register at the end of the year was 19—7 Pulmonary and 12 non-pulmonary.

Three non pulmonary cases were notified during the year and 7 cases were removed from the Register on account of, either, recovery, death or having left the district.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

Water Supply :—The Ripponden Urban District has now two sources of water supply (a) from the springs at Blackhouse reservoir (Soyland) and (b) from Booth Dean reservoir (Rishworth) in the Wakefield catchment area, the total quantity allowed to be taken from the latter being 16,760 gallons daily. The waters have been examined on several occasions and both are of excellent organic purity, whilst the Rishworth water remains very acid and plumbo-solvent.

Towards the end of summer the amount of water in the Blackhouse reservoir became so small that, in order to avoid risk of shortage, a connection was made—with the consent of the Wakefield Corporation, for which the Council is very grateful—between the Rishworth and Soyland mains at Slitheroe Bridge and part of the old Soyland district was supplied from Rishworth. This continued until the end of the year. As a result a larger number of houses were supplied by the plumbo-solvent Rishworth water. I am glad, however, that you have decided to instal in a small building a Bell's water-neutralising plant to deal with the defect so that it will soon be possible to use either supply as required.

In out-lying parts, farms and other houses have private water supplies. Even in the centre of Ripponden a few houses are supplied from a private well.

Drainage and Sewerage.—There has been no sewerage extension during the year.

Closet Accommodation.—Four privies were reconstructed as water closets and 15 WC.'s were constructed for new houses.

You resolved that it is the Council's policy that all existing privies be converted, without undue delay, to the water-carriage system where a water supply and sewers are available. Towards this end you decided that, in approved cases, the Council will make a contribution towards the cost, of 30/- per conversion except that in a block of closets belonging to the same owner £1 only be paid for second and each additional conversion.

Scavenging.—Mr. Taylor in his report states “The amount of scavenging throughout the district is constantly increasing in view of the new practice of collecting refuse from premises where ashbins have been provided. The tipping methods have received my attention and I hope eventually to have all tipping done on the correct controlled method whereby nuisances are almost entirely eliminated.”

Ashpits are not emptied by the Council.

Schools.—I visited the four schools on various occasions but did not find anything of an insanitary nature.

Factories and Workshops.—I have nothing to report on these. Form 572 has been completed.

Housing.

The erection by private enterprise of dwelling houses (15) in Ripponden and Barkisland has continued, all tending to improve the standard of housing. It is also noticeable that many houses have been improved, in some cases fitted with new windows, in others altered so that bath and water-closet are introduced whilst others have had electric lighting introduced. All this good work continues and is a credit to the Council and its officials.

There is still delay in carrying out demolition orders but this is not so important from a health point of view now that the houses have been vacated.

Demolition orders were made in respect of 11 houses.

Number of houses inspected were 58 (70 inspections).

Number of houses requiring further action 47.

Further details are given in Table D.

Three dwelling-houses were found to be infested by bed-bugs and were dealt with by the Sanitary Inspector.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

Inspection of cows on the registered milk-producers premises is carried out by a County Council Assistant Veterinary Officer (usually accompanied by the Sanitary Inspector).

Apparently 3 cows were found to be tuberculous and were slaughtered.

County Officials also examine from time to time samples of milk supplied to schools.

Apart from 3 pig carcasses which were found outside slaughter-houses, no unsound food was found in the slaughter-houses themselves. This is a change from previous years

I include the remarks of Mr. Taylor on **Cow Sheds and Milk Production** with which I agree.

“Considerable attention has been paid and is still being given to this branch of the work. Many of the premises are below the standard required. Owners and tenants are being informed of the works required to be carried out. The registers are being brought up to date, the position at present being :—

No. of Cowkeepers	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	95
No. of Cowkeepers registered				...	...	...	...	95
No. of Cowsheds	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	114
No. of Milk Cows (variable)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	712
No. of Wholesale traders			...	...	...	...	...	37
No. of Retail traders	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	86''

With the assistance of Mr. Taylor and Mr. Holroyd I have completed the various Tables and Forms, a copy of each of which is provided for your information.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

A. J. W. STEPHEN.

